

Gamefreaks

PLAYSTATION 2

PC

PS ONE

XBOX

GAME BOY ADVANCE

GAMECUBE



GAME BOY ADVANCE SP

FREELANCER

COMMAND & CONQUER GENERALS

METROID PRIME

DOA EXTREME BEACH VOLLEYBALL

LORD OF THE RINGS THE TWO TOWERS

DEVIL MAY CRY 2

THE MARK OF KRI

PANZER DRAGON ORTA

V8 SUPERCARS RACE DRIVER

METAL GEAR SOLID 2 SUBSTANCE

INDIANA JONES & THE EMPEROR'S TOMB

TOEJAM & EARL III

YAGER

PRIDE FC

ROBIN HOOD THE LEGEND OF SHERWOOD

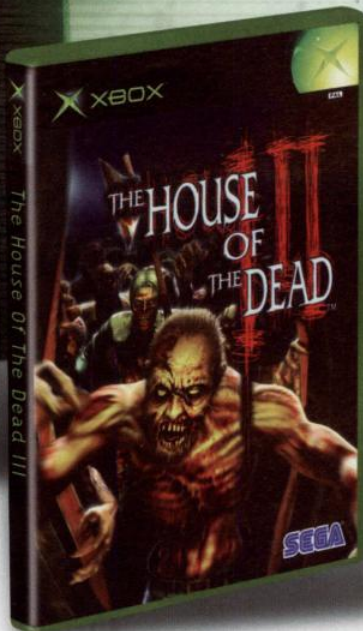


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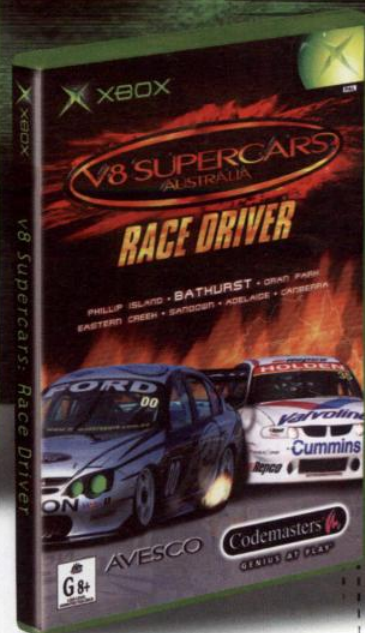
METAL GEAR SOLID 2:
SUBSTANCE



THE HOUSE OF
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PANZER DRAGOON
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thank you

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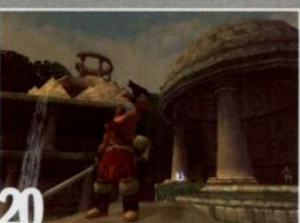
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read me

Welcome to another issue of Gamefreaks, back again to dazzle you with news and information on new and upcoming games for the month ahead.

On the cover this month is the Game Boy Advance SP - we take a look at Nintendo's new handheld on page 8 and you can even win one (details on page 27).

It's been another demanding month for our busy team of reviewers but we've managed to pack 35 games into this hefty issue. Microsoft's Freelancer is our feature review this month. Check out page 10 to find out why we're going loopy over this new space shooter.

The recently released Command & Conquer Generals could be top multiplayer RTS of all time, Metroid Prime is the Gamecube's answer to Halo and The Mark of Kri looks like a highly promising 3D action title for PS2 - all are reviewed this month.

And we have masses of celebrated Xbox titles including Panzer Dragoon Orta, Metal Gear Solid 2 Substance, DOA Extreme Beach Volleyball, Lord of the Rings The Two Towers, Toejam & Earl III, Yager, Shenmue II and many more.

That's it for another month. Please keep those letters and suggestions coming in, we always want to hear from our readers want to see - we'll be back in April with a brand new line-up.

FROM WHIZKID TO CEO: ALEX GARDEN

Gamefreaks interviews Impossible Creatures creator

Alex Garden (CEO & lead designer, Relic Entertainment, development house for Impossible Creatures) visited Australia recently promoting his new real-time strategy Impossible Creatures.

At 26 years, Alex has been described as "the next Sid Meier." A game tester at fifteen, he has definitely done his time in the trenches. After a brief spell with Electronic Arts Canada and Radical Entertainment, he founded his own company Relic Entertainment in 1997.

Gamefreaks: What do you hope to achieve with Impossible Creatures?

Alex Garden: We hope that Impossible Creatures pushes the envelope on what you can do with the RTS genre from both a gameplay and technology standpoint. The combined creature idea is the more obvious innovation. We hope that this part of the game increases player investment in their units by allowing them to design and grow attached to an army that suits their play style.

On the technology side we've designed Impossible Creatures to provide mod developers with the best tools and support towards developing extensions of the IC technology, be they modifications to the original game, or completely new games. We firmly believe that by supporting mod developers we support variety and innovation in the game industry.

Gamefreaks: How did you come up with the 'swapping animal parts' idea?

AG: It's a long and unfortunately un-witty story that has its roots in a conversation about alien abduction that was overheard in a local coffee shop. This conversation gave birth to the idea of genetically modifying abducted creatures, which then changed into combining animals together and fighting them against one another. Have I lost you, yet?

Gamefreaks: Can you name some other games that you enjoy – games that maybe influenced you (and your team) during the development of Impossible Creatures?

AG: We love RTS games, so you can pretty much name any big name RTS title out there, and we played it. Most of our direct inspiration came from these titles, but on the design side we also took a lot of inspiration from non-computer based games like Magic: The Gathering, and Warhammer, both brilliant games with very complex systems that allow players to customize to their play style.

Gamefreaks: I'm sure our readers would appreciate some insider info, straight from the horse's mouth – pardon the expression. So what's your favourite (or most deadly!) creature combination?

AG: I prefer the Chimp/Hippo, all chimp with the hippo's torso. It's a level 4 artillery creature with the pack and herd abilities. When used in numbers it can take down level 5 creatures and devastate bases. The Chameleon/Giraffe is a great level 3 ranged unit, fast and tough with a good ranged attack. It's a great way to take the fight to the enemy in the mid-game. Couple it with a strong artillery unit, or build a stealthy variant and unleash an ambush on incoming enemy creatures.

Gamefreaks: Few development houses are brave enough to implement new ideas into already successful genres – 3D is the current trend and your own brand of unit creation model is inventive, but how do you see real-time strategy evolving in the years to come?

AG: That's hard to answer, not because of the lack of possibilities but because of the near limitless amount of areas where the genre could be innovated on. Currently RTS's are very abstract and symbolic. Your 'nation', 'civilization', or 'army' is composed of a couple dozen villagers and an army of 100 or so guys. I'm not saying RTS's need to be bigger, with more units, that's a simple change that doesn't produce a vast improvement in gameplay, but rather that the concepts that they are built on might be more entertaining if they were less abstract. I'd like to see a historical RTS that was played on a truly global scale, or an RTS that focuses on characters as opposed to sprawling armies. War is played out on more stages than the battlefield, it would be interesting to explore that idea within the context of an RTS.



"In a coffee shop, we came up with the idea of genetically modifying abducted creatures, which then changed into combining animals together and fighting them against one another" - Alex Garden (CEO of Relic Entertainment)



SMALL SCREEN ATTACHES!

JOYTECH, one of Europe's biggest manufacturers of third party peripherals, have come up with a 5.6 inch colour TFT Monitor for the PS2. Twin stereo Speakers, integrated Audio/Video Inputs allow connection of an external AV source to the Monitor (iDVD, VCR) and AV Multi Output allows you to connect your console to an external TV and/or Hi-Fi without removal of the Monitor. Sweet!



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If you want to win one of these, check out page 27 for details.



EA CLEANS UP IN VEGAS

At the sixth annual Interactive Achievement Awards held recently in Las Vegas, EA walked away with a total of 11 awards including the biggest award of the show - Game of the Year for Battlefield 1942.

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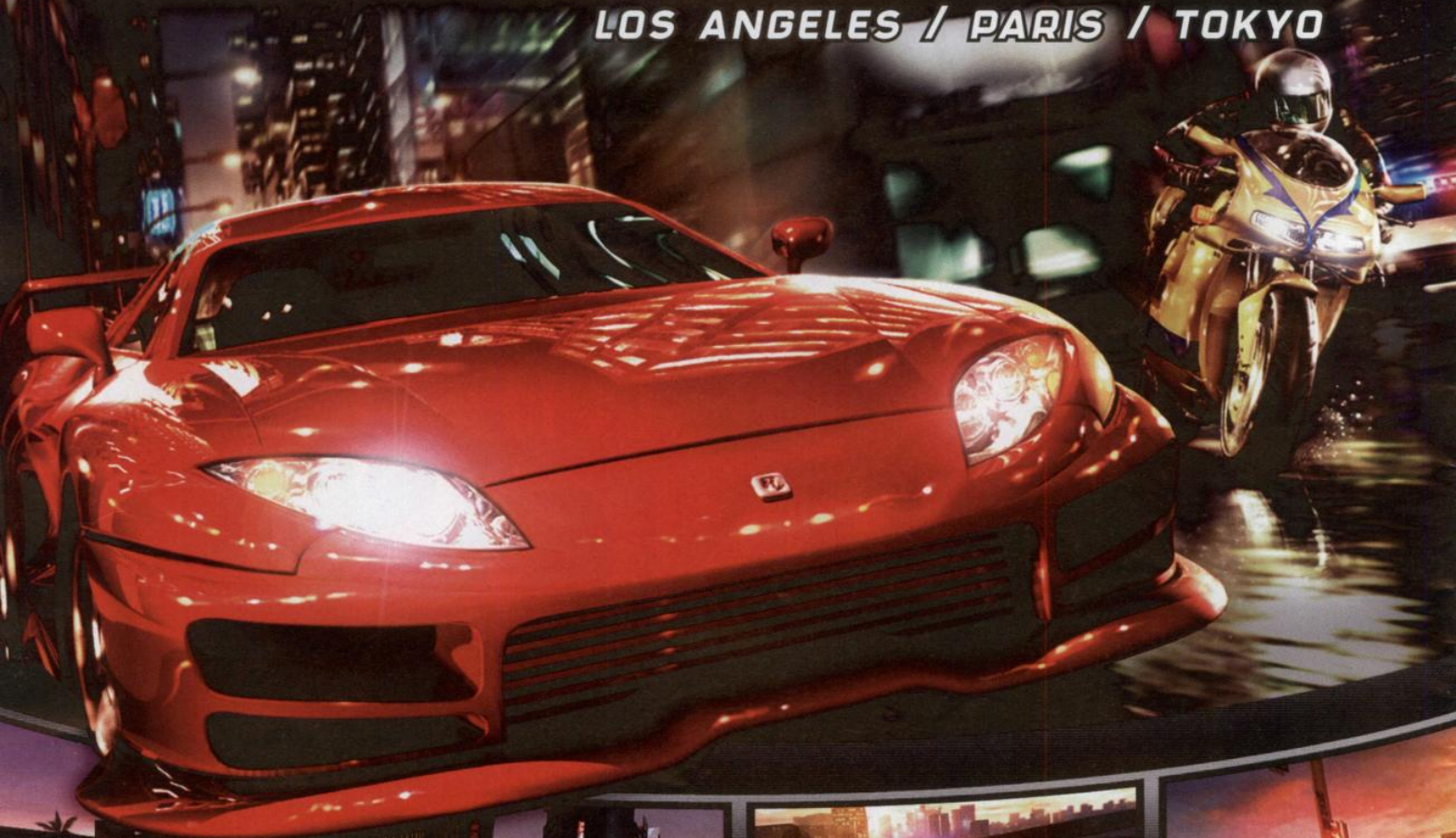
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VIETCONG

PC ■ TAKE2 INTERACTIVE
Released: March

One of the more popular FPS online demos being downloaded at the moment is Vietcong.

20 dramatic single-player missions let you command your troops into combat, paving the way for exciting online battles where players can choose to fight for either the US Special Forces or the resourceful Vietcong. The unpredictability of jungle warfare makes a nice change from the usual urban or WWII settings – look out for Charlie in the trees!



SHENMUE II

XBOX ■ MICROSOFT
Released: March

Any Shenmue fans still getting over the fact that the sequel was cancelled for the ill-fated Dreamcast can now play Sega's award-winning sequel as an Xbox exclusive.

Shenmue II sees our hero Ryo travelling to Hong Kong in pursuit of his dad's killer. Packed with drama, fighting, RPG elements and game-within-game arcade classics (After Burner II, Hang On), the Xbox has allowed Sega to introduce Mip-mapping, texture filtering, anti-aliasing and a much greater polygon count.



LEGENDS OF ZELDA THE WIND WAKER

GAMECUBE ■ NINTENDO
Released: May

Not due until May but here at Gamefreaks, we're already gearing up for Nintendo's cel shaded super-sequel.

Legends of Zelda has been getting raved about despite early grumblings from Zelda nuts who were worried about the new look. Nintendo have announced that the game will come with a free memory card (RRP \$44.95) and two-game bonus disc containing the N64 classic The Legend of Zelda: Ocarina of Time and a previously unreleased version known as "Master Quest".



MIDNIGHT CLUB II

PS2/XBOX ■ TAKE2 INTERACTIVE
Released: April

Street racing is not just huge on Auckland's North Shore; illegal racing syndicates are active all over the world. From Rockstar, who have already given us the fantastically popular Grand Theft Auto franchise, Midnight Club II lets you experience the thrill of driving fast and furious through some of the most famous cities around the globe.

Players can select from the latest high performance cars (or bikes) and then must choose their own path through the city to the finish line.



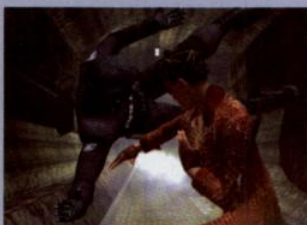
WAR OF THE MONSTERS

PLAYSTATION 2 ■ SCEI
Released: April

Hot on the heels of last year's Godzilla Destroy All Monsters Melee comes another tribute to the building sized creatures made famous in sci-fi B-movies and Japanese monster epics.

War of the Monsters lets players choose from a big ape, a radioactive lizard, super-sized robots, and... well, you get the picture. Then you go on the rampage, fighting, stomping on cars, people and tearing up lampposts etc.

Single player missions are fun but by far the best idea is to gather a few friends for some multi-player mayhem.

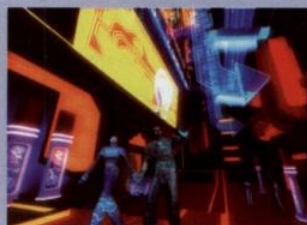


ENTER THE MATRIX

PS2/XBOX ■ INFOGRAMES
Released: May

On May 15, the long awaited Enter the Matrix will release simultaneously with the film The Matrix Reloaded. Early reports have everyone here at Gamefreaks salivating at the prospect of bullet-time gunfights, martial arts and even using hacking skills to unlock hidden parts of the game.

The films creators were deeply involved in the making of this title- in fact certain scenes from the film are explained by scenes that take place only in the game. Infogrames have promised us code so stay tuned.



TRON 2.0

PC ■ EA GAMES
Released: April

If you're old enough to remember the film, then you've probably been wondering where this game has been for the last decade and a half. The good news is that someone down at Disney interactive has finally seen the light and later this month, PC gamers will get to enter disc battles and light cycle races, and ultimately pit their skills against the evil mainframe computer.

The game and its characters all have the signature neon look made famous in the film and with over 30 levels, we have high hopes for this one.



STAR WARS KNIGHTS OF THE OLD REPUBLIC

XBOX ■ MICROSOFT
Released: March

Drowning in a sea of Star Wars shooters and space combat games, LucasArts have now come up with something a little different. Star Wars: Knights of the Old Republic (KOTOR), the first ever Star Wars RPG!

KOTOR is huge, using a third-person view there are 10 worlds to explore, more than 100 cut-scenes, over 12,000 lines of spoken dialogue.

Like Final Fantasy, KOTOR is a party-based game, so other humans, aliens, or droids can join your gang as you explore throughout this marathon adventure.

ADVANCED GAME BOY

Nintendo's popular handheld gets a facelift

Game Boy Advance has been a winner for go-anywhere gaming since its introduction two years ago. Taking over from the Game Boy Color it packed a hefty punch into a sleek, pocket-friendly design that was hard to put down. With the release of the Game Boy Advance SP, Nintendo have upped the ante again.

The look of the GBA SP sets it apart immediately, the stylish lines and designer colours putting it alongside other must-have items in the modern mobile lifestyle. But the change is more than cosmetic. Flick the power, flip up the lid and the performance upgrade is immediately apparent. The new front-lit LCD screen is a real gem and considerably improves the game experience.

Backed up with the grunty new Lithium Ion rechargeable battery, players will be able to go longer, with less fatigue,

in virtually any lighting conditions.

Despite the radically different physical appearance, vital statistics – weight, screen size, CPU – surprisingly remain the same. The GBA SP actually feels lighter, perhaps because the weight of the hinged screen sits over the controls rather than slung between them, and while the slim case looks small it was a comfortable fit for even the larger handed gamers here on staff. The D-pad and buttons have fractionally shorter travel on them so Mario Karters or V-Rally veterans may take a couple of laps to adjust their drift, but once you're there it's hard to go back.

Front-lit LCD makes the pixels jump out at you no matter what the conditions, and performs consistently even if the light changes, improving even further playability outdoors or sitting next to the bus window. No more angling the screen to catch the light, or losing visibility at critical moments if a shadow falls across you. The hinge design lets you move and set the screen through a full 180 degrees to suit your head/neck angle, which is useful in eliminating reflections and essential in obtaining maximum comfort levels while stretched out on



The Advance SP includes lighting along the screen's edge. For the first time, it also comes with a rechargeable battery instead of depending on AAs. The battery pack lasts at least 10 hours with the light and up to 18 hours without



the couch or under a tree.

The GBA SP is backwardly compatible with virtually all the games and accessories in the Game Boy line, and comes with a new (additional) multi-access port that also takes the AC adaptor and will allow for a headphone adaptor. The centre mounted speaker is a revelation for its size, rendering in-game music, sfx and speech with clarity and warmth all the way from very low to maxed out volume levels. All together it is a very complete package, pushing the improvements as far as current technology allows, without forsaking the huge numbers of current Game Boy fans or the developer community which continues to

push the platform with a steady schedule of new releases.

But the amount of work that has gone into the GBA SP is an indication that Nintendo are looking to do more than preach to the converted. The elegant design and up-to-date looks are bound to attract a sophisticated audience, and perhaps woo new categories of mobile gamer.

Ben Ward, Nintendo Product Manager for New Zealand distributors Monaco Corporation Ltd, says that while the target audience for a GBA owner is predominantly aged between 6-14 they believe the GBA SP will attract the older gaming market. Initial response from the pre-release material and actual units circulating

through the industry suggest that they're right on the money with that approach.

Comments from the US indicate punters are impressed with the form factor, placing it as a 'device' alongside cellphones and PDAs rather than a gadget or toy, suggesting a more ready acceptance amongst the post- Pokémon crowd. Battery life and screen are seen as key features in satisfying adults who expect a user experience with little or no compromise.

Many 'older' gamers are familiar with Game Boy retro titles from younger days, and having moved on are now heading back to Mario and Zelda for quick fix gaming, either in the office or on the move. Newer titles on the GBA and GBA SP anticipate the needs of this group with both action titles and more substantial fare.

The Game Boy Advance SP means that classic best sellers such as Mario Kart, Golden Sun, The Legend Of Zelda, along with the Super Mario titles and all the Pokémon titles from GameBoy Colour days, are even more accessible while hot releases like Metroid Fusion show themselves at their stunning best.

20 MILLION SOLD

With over 20 million in the hands of happy gamers worldwide, and 28,000 here in New Zealand alone, the Game Boy Advance has been a huge success. Monaco Corporation Ltd, third party distributors for Nintendo products in New Zealand, are confident that the GBA platform has a future alongside the GBA SP.

In the words of Ben Ward, product manager for the category: "The GBA SP is an

expansion of the GameBoy Advance line, not a replacement for the current unit. We plan to continue to sell GameBoy Advance. We believe the two products, with different pricing and features, will sell well side-by-side for some

time. The current GameBoy Advance is more than meeting the needs of millions of players worldwide. GameBoy Advance SP is more for those who want game play flexibility in more lighting conditions."



Nintendo, which owns the handheld game world controlling a 98% share, is now facing new competition from mobile phone makers



The SP has its screen built into its lid and unfolds vertically on a hinge. It folds into a 7.5 centimetre square about an inch thick — nearly half the size of older GBA units



FREELANCER

PLATFORM: PC ■ PUBLISHER: MICROSOFT ■ DEVELOPER: DIGITAL ANVIL ■ RELEASE: OUT NOW



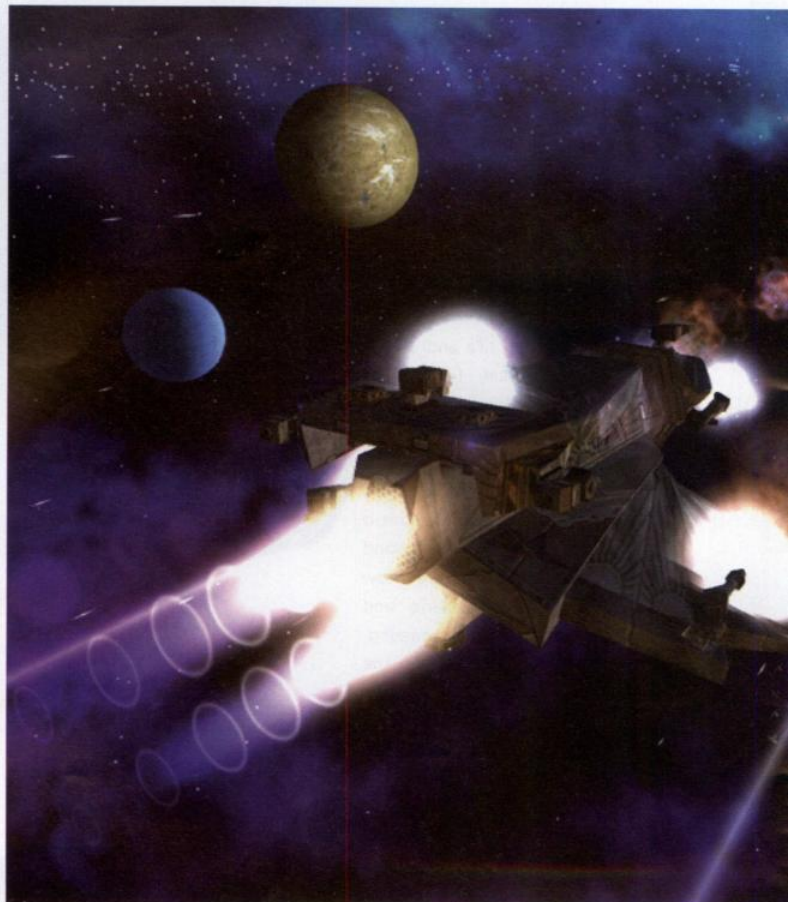
The Hollywood voice talent Ian Ziering (Steve from 90210) and Andy Serkis (Gollum) lifts the dialogue but the low-level NPCs can grate on the nerves - particularly if you need repairs or rumours in a hurry. Judicious use of the ESC key to skip through intro sequences will get you to the action much quicker

Freelancer generated huge excitement when it previewed at E3 back in 1999. Direct ancestors in the form of the Wing Commander series were fresh in gamer's minds with space trading & combat still a mainstream genre. In the intervening years graphics have ramped up in quality and the PC gaming scene has been dominated by breathtaking advances in RTS/RPG/FPS gameplay, so anticipation is running high for this title to inject fresh life into outer space.

The FMV that opens the story is a mini-epic in itself and the cut-scenes throughout the single-player story keep the excitement running high. The space combat is fast and furious, the game engine pumps out the pixels even on milder hardware despite handling enough ships, projectiles and explosions to fill the skies in all directions. To keep frame rate consistently high, ship models and detail are more current rather than next generation, but cruising past a capital ship in its full glory is awe-inspiring and nothing beats the buzz of flying through the exploding wreckage of your last victim. With a grunty graphics card and the resolution cranked up Freelancer puts out the best explosions in space since the Death Star blew up.

The downtime in making waypoints or docking is ideal for planning trade runs or getting a feel for the various factions and activities from sector to sector. It is entirely possible to treat the single-player game as a combat action-only title, but if you scratch the surface and unravel the goings-on within and between each system a universe unfolds.

The single player storyline opens nicely, putting you at the



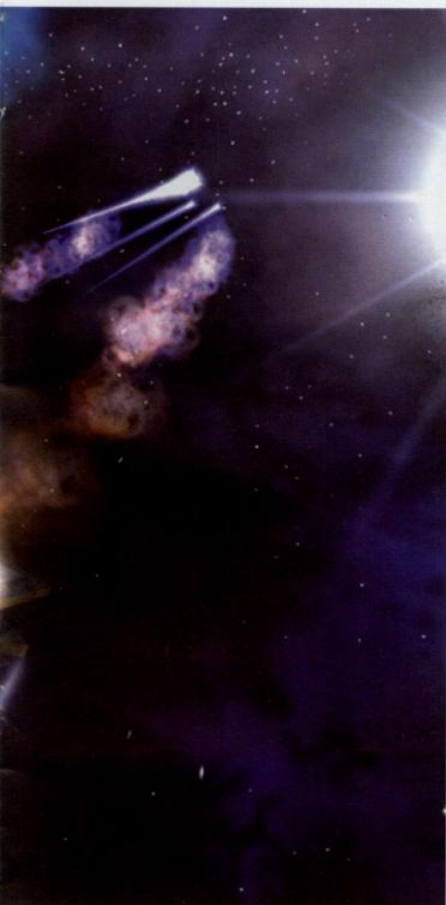
Spending hard earned cash on kickass ship and weapons upgrades gets immediate results in combat. So shop often and creatively!

heart of a system-wide political intrigue. You can get on with things straight away, or as throughout the game take the time to run some side missions and pile up money. Occasionally the story will assert itself and demand direct flight to a particular destination, or hold back gaining a level until story requirements are met.

The balance between plot-driven objectives and free play works well enough to allow for casual sessions - you can make significant progress even in a short half hour session - and sustains interest if you've settled in for the long haul. The build-up and mini-climax that ends the storyline set in the

initial "Liberty" system is a real heart-pounder, maintaining pace and excitement through a series of action set-pieces that neatly weave story, characters and massive doses of multi-ship combat into a compelling and satisfying experience.

There are several aspects to combat, and it can be a long wait if you only look for better shields or main guns. Missile combat is devastating once mastered, and the flipside is that countermeasures and sharp flying are essential to defeating missile equipped enemies. Available weapons vary from system to system, and a side trip to pick up something special or salvage



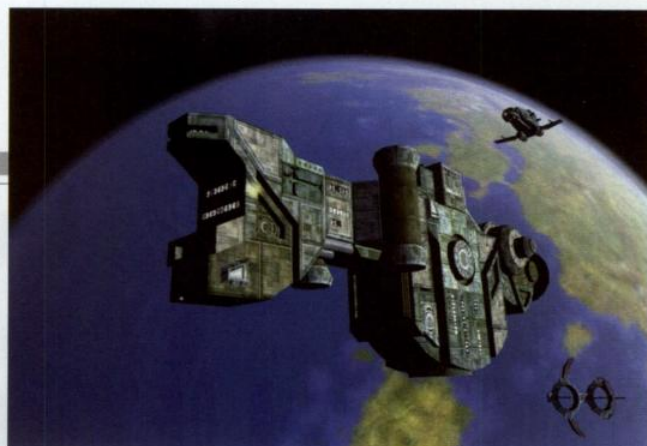
out an enemy leader, can be a sticking point until the right combination of weapons and tactics can be applied - do the homework.

Getting more hardpoints means a serious outlay on a new ship, but the mechanism to transfer or trade on-board equipment is well thought out. Bargaining down the sticker price by trading in outdated equipment lets you get into something new much quicker, and since a better ship means bigger earning potential and improved odds of survival, the upgrade can pay for itself in a few short missions.

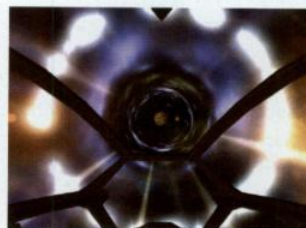
Freelancer's multiplayer potential is obvious, and numerous game features point to a rich online interaction. The combat is compelling, and has the complexity to suit a huge range of playing styles, as does the trading and mission aspects of the game. It remains to be seen whether this title will generate the critical mass of committed Freelancers to populate an online universe, but the possibility is exciting indeed, and until then we're saving up for a Heavy Fighter and saving the galaxy as we go!

from pirate encounters can net you something cool enough to take you through to the next level. Nothing beats finding a kick-ass cannon just floating by in space.

Trade-offs between projectile speed, range, refire rate, shield or hull damage must be made between the items equipped to the limited number of hardpoints each ship carries. Subtle differences can make or break you. Almost any mission situation has the potential to get out of hand if you are outnumbered, so working a combo to reduce the number of enemies as quickly as possible is important. Often a particular task, such as taking

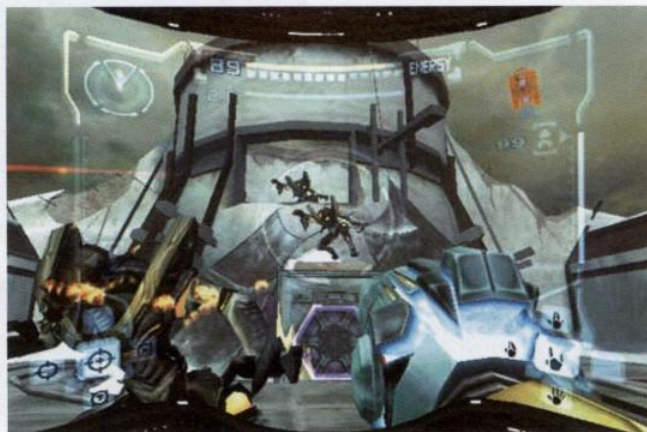


Getting around is fairly intuitive, using jump-gates and local systems in the standard way, and the waypoint mapping system is sensible and effective. The interface works well to filter the wealth of data out there, and everything you should or could know - like what they're buying and selling in the Colorado system - can be found with a bit of digging



METROID PRIME

PLATFORM: GAMECUBE ■ PUBLISHER: NINTENDO ■ DEVELOPER: NINTENDO ■ RELEASE: APRIL 4



Towards the end of last century, when EA's Medal of Honor series became a hit, among other things it taught developers one important lesson – console gamers want to shoot people too! And not just people exclusively but vampires, zombies, aliens, ATF agents, little old ladies... pretty much anyone or anything that strays into the crosshairs.

PlayStation 2 owners have TimeSplitters 2 and of course, Halo reigns supreme on Xbox. But what about the Gamecube? Where's Perfect Dark 2 or an updated Goldeneye?

Cube fans have been starved of a decent shooter but don't go organising a telethon for them just yet – Nintendo are about to release Metroid Prime, a top class FPS to rival even Halo itself and its 100% exclusive to Gamecube!

Retro heroine Samus Aran wears a power suit that allows her to survive in alien environments and the harsh cold of space.

Using only a single analogue thumb stick, control is very different to Halo, but should be second nature to anyone who has played Goldeneye, Perfect Dark or any of the other N64 shooters.

But perhaps the biggest difference from rival FPS titles



Metroid Prime's brilliant, highly original design is a better-than-perfect transition from Retro to next-generation gameplay

is that Samus can transform herself into a morph ball which lets you roll, squeeze through tight spaces and even outrun an enemy.

Graphically speaking, Metroid Prime is impressive. The visor idea works very well and looks great – occasionally you catch a glimpse of Samus's face reflecting against the glass that will even fog up when travelling through humid levels. The painstaking attention to detail is unrivalled. All of this beauty and practically no load times whatsoever – amazing!

Link options with Metroid Fusion (GBA) will unlock secrets – completing both games will

allow players to unlock and enjoy the original NES version of Metroid.

Unlike Halo, which offered a plethora of multiplayer options, Metroid Prime was designed primarily to be an immersive solo experience – the game has no two player options at all which may come as a shock to some but it works.

The music is edgy, maybe too edgy – we recommend you turn down composer Kenji Yamamoto's panic attack soundtrack early on.

Metroid Prime is simply a must-own title for Gamecube.



Metroid Prime features out-of-this-world visuals that no one knew the GameCube could produce. It'll make you wonder why all GameCube games don't look this good

COMMAND AND CONQUER GENERALS

PLATFORM: PC ■ PUBLISHER: EA GAMES ■ DEVELOPER: EA GAMES ■ RELEASE: OUT NOW



The original Command and Conquer was enormously addictive.

There was nothing in the mid 90s to match the thrill of controlling hundreds of troops and tanks, even unleashing weapons of mass destruction – albeit via the innocuous 14.4k modem.

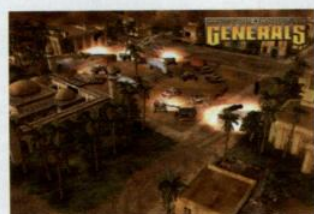
Now eight years and a few modems later the series is back.

The USA, China and a militant terrorist group known as the Global Liberation Army (GLA) make up the three fighting factions – poles apart, in their weaponry and philosophies but the balance between the trio works remarkably well.

The Americans rule the skies with Stealth fighters, Comanche helicopters and Aurora Bombers while barracks and war factories can produce equally impressive ground units and a variety of missiles. But USA hi-tech comes with a high price tag.

Chinese tactics are simple – mass production!

Relying on superior numbers and nationalistic zeal to carry their troops to glory, the Chinese can still boast some imposing hardware. The Battlemaster, Dragon and Scorpion tanks are ably supported by Red Guard troops.



The US rely on hi-tech, high priced weaponry but RPG-carrying GLA rebels can take down costly enemy hardware at virtually no cost. It looks like the balance of the game is just right and the units are great. Specialist terrorist units can be trained to hijack enemy vehicles or even steal cars and become GLA suicide bombers

Speaker towers heal Red Army units when in range of their propaganda, hackers take over buildings and drain enemy funds, squadrons of MiG fighters patrol the skies and China poses the only nuclear threat in the game – their bases are powered by volatile nuclear reactors, and their weaponry bolstered by nuclear cannons, tanks and long range missiles.

The Global Liberation Army is Middle Eastern in origin though without the official backing of a country.

The GLA are resourceful, religiously motivated freedom fighters that can operate

anywhere without relying on a power source and GLA workers gather resources and construct buildings so there is no need to build extra units.

GLA units are a bit unconventional but can be highly effective.

The campaign missions are fun, even challenging (especially when set on brutal) but they are just a precursor for the grandeur of online play.

If your PC is up to spec, C&C Generals is as good as it gets, but like all the best real-time strategy titles, this is best when played with human opponents.



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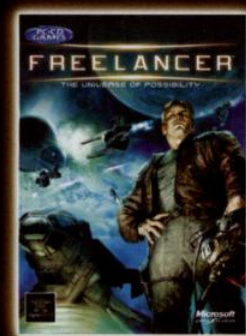
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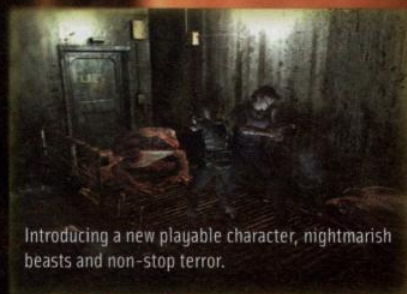
EVIL IS BORN.



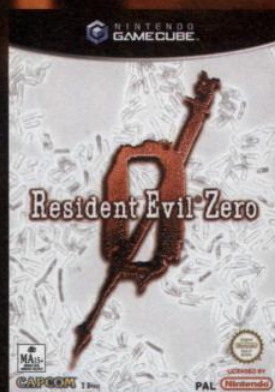
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MARCH 2003



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DEAD OR ALIVE EXTREME BEACH VOLLEYBALL

PLATFORM: XBOX ■ PUBLISHER: MICROSOFT ■ DEVELOPER: TECMO ■ RELEASE: MARCH 28



The excuses Tecmo come up with to take the clothes off these bitmapped beauties are as flimsy as the material that covers their bathing suit area! Even the box art is about as subtle as a knee in the nuts.

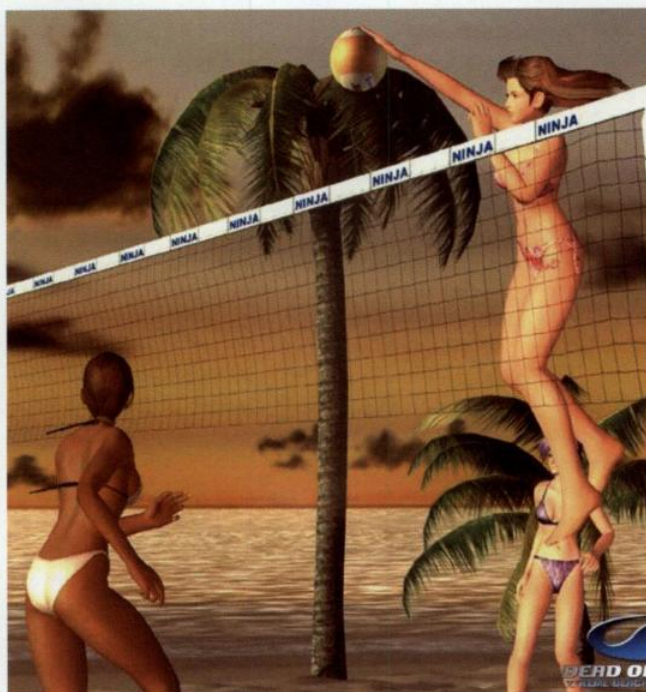
But hey, we love 'em for it and not just because Dead or Alive Xtreme Beach Volleyball is the Swimsuit Issue title on the Xbox – Oh no no! ...it's a very solid game besides. Honest.

The plot sees DOA character Zack (voice acted by NBA star Dennis Rodman) inviting DOA characters Kasumi, Lei Fang and all the sassy women of DOA to his island getaway to take a break from all their worries. What a guy!

The single-player game consists of selecting a DOA girl from the eight (including new gal, Lisa) and then spending a few weeks on the island shopping, buying gifts, making friends, sunbathing and well ...playing volleyball!

Two analog buttons control the action – there's a spike and a set. The harder you press, the harder you hit the ball etc. The closer you can get your character to the ball, the cleaner you are able to hit it. If you've played Sega's arcade beach volleyball title Beach Spikers, you'll know what to expect. The control system works pretty well and won't take long to learn.

The most bizarre aspect of



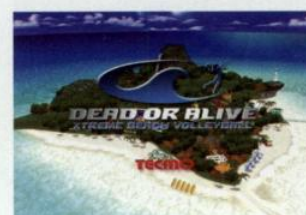
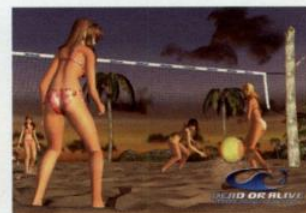
Here the DOA ladies are playing beach volleyball in the skimpiest outfits. You can earn money in tournaments to purchase even more scandalous attire

the game sees your character trying to win favour with the other DOA girls by buying them gifts like ice cream sundaes and even new bikinis – this can result in either an instant friendship or your gift will be unceremoniously dumped in the trash.

The music is syrupy pop, including Christina Aguilera and even the crusty old Spice Girls crank out a tune but somehow it fits the upbeat mood of the game – fans of decent music fear not, you can play your own tunes care of the Xbox hard drive.

Better looking than but not as serious as the recently released Beach Spikers, DOA Xtreme Beach Volleyball is a light-hearted, somewhat addictive sports title.

Fun in the sun



This is not all about volleyball. Players can spend some time in the arcade playing Dead or Alive 3; there's a cinema and even a casino, where you can try your hand at poker, blackjack, roulette and more. There's even a dance competition and a beauty contest

THE LORD OF THE RINGS THE TWO TOWERS

PLATFORM:XBOX ■ PUBLISHER:EA GAMES ■ DEVELOPER: EA GAMES ■ RELEASE: OUT NOW



A few months back, EA released *The Lord of the Rings: The Two Towers* for the PlayStation 2 – a beautiful game but anyone looking to dine out on a five-course RPG found themselves feeding on big-budget, beat ‘em up fast-food. But as beat ‘em ups go, this is one of the best you’ll ever see. Wellington based special effects wizards Weta provided digital doubles of Aragorn, Legolas, Gimli and the Orc hordes which translates to flawless character animation and an authentic look for the whole game.

In terms of the gameplay, expect non-stop third-person action/adventure set against the now famous backdrops and landmarks of Tolkien’s Middle Earth.

The Two Towers uses a clever tactical combat system that includes high speed attacks, ranged weapons, defensive techniques and special combination moves – as you work your way through the 13 levels, experience points can be won and used to upgrade various abilities and weapons.

The game isn’t epic, if you’re good enough, you can defeat Lord Sauron, destroy the ring of power and restore peace to Middle Earth all in a few sittings. But with three very different playable characters, you’ll want to play again and again. It will be a while before you tire of hunting Orc.

If you were bored stiff by Vivendi’s Tolkien-inspired snoozer then check out the intense action that EA have cooked up – there’s no huge yawn-fest expedition but you’ll be getting a much more thrill packed (did we mention fun?) gaming experience.



With his faithful battleaxe Gimli performs a premature autopsy on an extra-large orc



DEVIL MAY CRY 2

PLATFORM:PLAYSTATION 2 ■ PUBLISHER:MONAO ■ DEVELOPER: CAPCOM ■ RELEASE: APRIL 4



The original *Devil May Cry* thrilled PS2 owners with its darkly gothic theme and charismatic lead character Dante, so we were pleased when Capcom’s sequel finally showed up at the office.

What’s different from the original I hear you ask? Well, not a lot – Capcom have stuck with the winning formula and apart from the fact that the game is over too soon, it’s still way longer than the original and pretty much picks up where that game left off.

Each level is littered with scary monsters that are best eradicated using Dante’s patented two-fisted shooting style or if you prefer, you can swoosh and hack your enemies with an oversized sword. Leaping around and firing whilst in mid air is always fun and the dynamic camera angles help to create a wonderfully cinematic atmosphere.

Devil May Cry 2 comes on two discs, the first contains Dante’s main adventure and the second lets you play through the same missions and battle the same bosses using the new character Lucia. There are some subtle differences and it’s definitely worth playing through both discs but Lucia, with her unlimited amount of throwing knives, moves and even fights in a similar way to Dante.

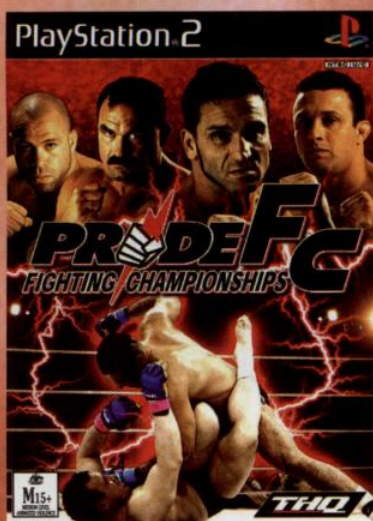
The beautiful levels are also packed with hidden power-ups and goodies so it’s worth taking your time but note that DMC2 is almost completely devoid of any storyline. However it doesn’t really detract from the game – Dante’s a demon slayer, he slays demons... what more do you need to know?



The original *Devil May Cry* sold 2 million copies so there’s a lot of expectation surrounding this sequel. Can cool strike twice?



Karate vs. Judo vs. Kick Boxing vs. Jiu Jitsu vs. Tae Kwon Do vs. Wrestling vs Boxing vs. Sumo



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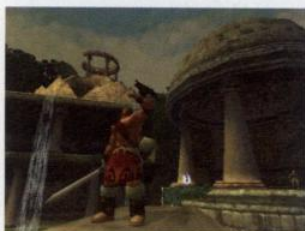
PlayStation®2





THE MARK OF KRI

PLATFORM:PLAYSTATION 2 ■ PUBLISHER:SCEI ■ DEVELOPER: RELIC ■ RELEASE: OUT NOW



The Mark of Kri is a showcase title for the PlayStation 2; the graphics and sound are great, the control is innovative and even the narrative is cleverly written

The Mark of Kri, Sony's PS2 biggie for the month, is definitely looking like a good prospect.

The game's designers are former Disney artists and animators who've provided a breathtaking looking game with rich, warm tones, vibrant backdrops and the soft, hand-drawn characters are of movie production standards.

The story begins amidst overgrown ancient ruins in the deep jungle where your character Rau, a fierce young warrior, is about to embark on the adventure of a lifetime.

A very old evil spell is threatening to open a gateway to a demon world, spelling certain doom for all mankind – jeepers!

The developers have created a nifty fighting system that allows you to take on multiple opponents simultaneously – a quick swivel of the right analogue stick produces a cool radar-like effect automatically assigning a button to up to three opponents at a time. Players can then thrust and parry attacks from all sides, and once you get good at this you can add show pony attack combos and stealth kills.

The Mark of Kri may look like a Disney but Rau is about as Disney as Genghis Khan; using brutal stealth attacks, he routinely relives guards of their heads (and other body parts) with his sword, battleaxe, bow and arrow etc.

The camera gets a special mention and keeps the gameplay flowing, Rau is often caught in the middle of multiple assailants and yet you're never shielded from the action.



PANZER DRAGON ORTA

PLATFORM:XBOX ■ PUBLISHER:INFOGRAMES ■ DEVELOPER: SEGA ■ RELEASE:MARCH 21



The levels are as vast as they are eye-catching, set in a troubled universe, where war and conflict are routine

This series first appeared during the mid-90s on Sega's own console, the Saturn, which was unceremoniously crushed under the weight of PlayStation sales through the final half of the decade.

Only a handful of gamers got to play Panzer Dragoon. Eight years and a couple of sequels later, it's back as an Xbox exclusive, rejuvenated and looking incredible, thanks mainly to Microsoft's console.

The game takes its name from Orta, the game's female protagonist who must single-handedly (unless you count the dragon she rides) take on an entire evil empire.

Players follow a fairly tight, linear path and apart from dodging incoming fire, you don't actually have to steer your dragon through the levels – Orta is more about protecting the beast rather than controlling it and you are largely a passenger, even if it is a well-armed one.

To avoid having gamers feel as if they are imprisoned on a flying beast, the levels occasionally branch out, offering alternate routes and creating a false impression of freedom.

Dragon morphing is a new innovation. Your winged beast comes in three distinct models and you can change between them at any time, which adds a strategic element to the chaotic shoot 'em up nature of the gameplay.

If riding atop a flying dragon and unleashing laser beam hell on an inconceivable number of airborne assailants sounds like your cup-of-tea, you may want to take a squiz.



METAL GEAR SOLID 2: SUBSTANCE

PLATFORM: XBOX ■ PUBLISHER: EA GAMES ■ DEVELOPER: KONAMI ■ RELEASE: OUT NOW



More than just an add-on, *Substance* is a full-on game featuring three special modes. The VR missions number in the hundreds, including ninja assignments and giant soldiers

A year ago, Konami's PS2 masterpiece *Metal Gear Solid 2: Sons of Liberty* featured on the cover of *Gamefreaks* (and every gaming magazine in the world) but 12 months on, Xbox owners are getting the first crack at an update that comes with a host of bonus extras.

MGS2: *Substance* is not a sequel - it's an updated, enhanced version that features the same game, apart from slight graphical improvements brought about by the Xbox's superior polygon-pushing power.

The new content is mostly made up of short VR and alternate missions (around 500) but better than these are the Snake tales, five scenarios set in various levels that let you use Solid Snake rather than the younger, blonder and more annoying Raiden.

Finish the main game and you unlock the 350-plus VR missions. Completing them unlocks an array of game options - Variety Mode, Weapons Mode (essentially target practice) and Boss Survival mode, which becomes playable only after beating the rest of the game. It's a treat to take on the resilient level bosses without having to play through the story.

The sound has improved thanks to a memorable score and 5.1 digital. But all this added polish and the endless mini-missions is just blobs of icing on a cake that was deemed delicious a year ago. By far the best reason to buy this game would be if you've missed playing it on the PS2. With its bizarre, twisting plot and easy control, MGS2: *Substance* is probably better than *Splinter Cell*.



INDIANA JONES AND THE EMPEROR'S TOMB

PLATFORM: PLAYSTATION 2 ■ PUBLISHER: EA GAMES ■ DEVELOPER: LUCAS ARTS ■ RELEASE: MARCH 20



Besides the whip, Indy fights using a wicked one-two punch combo and he can grab almost anything and use it as a weapon. Above is a PS2 screenshot, Xbox screens are on the right

I ndiana Jones and the *Infernal Machine* was only ok but we're holding out some hope for this newest LucasArts 3D action/adventure starring every housewife's favourite archaeologist Indiana Jones.

Released for the PS2 and Xbox, *Indiana Jones and the Emperor's Tomb* will be instantly familiar to fans of *Tomb Raider* and other third-person action-adventures, but a few developments help to distinguish the game.

It's 1935, and a Chinese businessman tempts Indiana with an intriguing offer. He wants Jones to explore the ancient tomb of the emperor in search of the Heart of the Dragon - a magical pearl that can control the minds of men.

This epic journey will take players to Prague, Ceylon, Istanbul, Hong Kong, the South China Sea, and an ancient temple. Each location is chopped up into smaller levels, but these are huge in scope. Expect to spend several hours in each of the exotic locales.

Indy's bull whip is both a weapon and a tool for crossing gaps. Many parts of the maps are only accessible if you use the whip.

The scenery throughout the game looks great. Exotic backdrops, waterfalls and temples match the detailed sets seen in the films. This is a mammoth adventure.

The variety of guns he is greater than ever and for now it would appear as if Dr. Jones has finally escaped the shadow of *Lara Croft*.



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YAGER
DEVELOPMENT

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V8 SUPERCARS RACE DRIVER

PLATFORM: XBOX ■ PUBLISHER: INFOGRAMES ■ DEVELOPER: CODEMASTERS ■ RELEASE: OUT NOW

V8 Supercar Race Driver is the latest from the British-based developer Codemasters, uniquely blending a cast of game characters with the sport's real-life drivers, locations and championship events.

This game was hugely impressive when it was released last year for the PlayStation 2 and it was only ever a matter of time before the series was adapted for the PC or in the case of this review, the Xbox.

V8 Supercar Race Driver comes with its own dramatic story complete with murder, intrigue and revenge. You play hot-headed rookie Ryan McKane, struggling to find his own identity, overshadowed by his older brother and his late father – both great drivers in their own right.

In his eagerness to make a name for himself, Ryan quickly joins a team entering famous championships all around the globe pitting your skills against real life drivers such as Craig Lowndes, Marcos Ambrose and the flying kiwi Greg Murphy.

You'll be able to enter 13 championships with 38 real-life international circuits (including Bathurst, Hockenheim and Silverstone) with as many as 42 real touring and sports cars. Sonically, the game is near perfect – all the V8s sound genuinely powerful and the piercing whine of the transmission is incredibly realistic.

V8 Supercar Race Driver on the Xbox is similar to the version previously seen on the PS2 but there are some notable differences, including 5.1 sound, textured tracks, up to 20 cars on screen at once, greater draw distances, greater colour depth and detail.

Hooning around Bathurst in a giant V8 was one of the highlights of last year – now experience it again on the Xbox.



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TOEJAM & EARL III

PLATFORM: XBOX ■ PUBLISHER: MICROSOFT ■ DEVELOPER: SEGA ■ RELEASE: OUT NOW



A decade has passed since ToeJam and Earl last appeared on the Sega Saturn and now everyone's favourite funky duo are back with a new adventure that's exclusive to Xbox.

Our heroes must recover the twelve sacred albums of funk from Earth and while there, convert as many Earthlings as possible to the ways of Funk.

This is a fairly standard 3D adventure platform game - you'll be jumping, shooting, collecting keys and items but it's the daft humour and strong characters that set this title apart.

ToeJam (or DJ TJ as he prefers to be known) is a super speedy, three-legged creature who raps like Snoop Dogg. TJ's best friend and neighbour is Big Earl (Big E) is a little more laid back, moves slower but is powerful in the ways of Funk Fu.

The third playable character is the lovely Latisha who adds a much needed feminine touch. Players can use each of the three characters unique traits by switching between ToeJam, Earl or Latisha during the levels.

Platform gaming is traditionally a solo affair but ToeJam and Earl III features a cool split-screen option that lets two players play cooperatively, sharing resources as they explore the all 30 levels.



PRIDE FC

PLATFORM: PLAYSTATION 2 ■ PUBLISHER: MONACO ■ DEVELOPER: THQ ■ RELEASE: MARCH 28



This PS2 brawler is based on the real-life Japanese PRIDE Fighting Championship, a popular "no rules" tough-man competition

Since professional wrestling has become little more than theatre nowadays, more violent events such as the Ultimate Fighting Championship (UFC) are gaining in popularity.

Mixed-martial arts competitions are commonly televised in the US and Japan but it's still fairly new here, just another lure of the pay TV.

In Japan, the equivalent of the UFC is Pride Fighting Championships or Pride FC. These events attract top boxers, brawlers, wrestlers and martial artists from all over the world who are paid big money to beat each other into submission before huge, oddly polite crowds.

Pride FC offers fight fans three separate modes - Grand Prix, a 16-man, winner-take-all, elimination tournament, Survival Mode is you versus pretty much everyone else and lastly, an exhibition lets you hand pick a pair of fighters from the 25 selectable.

If you've played the UFC games, you'll know the control system already - there's one button for each fist and one that controls each foot.

You can design your own full contact fighter using the Create-a-Fighter feature. Tons of appearance options allow you to come up with a pretty unique looking "athlete" but the best part is that you can customize his attacks. With training, you will get better at the combos and at defending. The resulting wins can be very satisfying.

Pride FC the game is just as brutal on your PS2 as it is on your TV.



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YAGER

PLATFORM: XBOX ■ PUBLISHER: THQ ■ RELEASE: APRIL 4



THQ have an upcoming space shooter for the Xbox and earlier this month we got to take a look at some code for Yager. You play a freighter pilot Magnus Tide, a reluctant hero, "Han Solo-type" who unwittingly gets pulled into a dangerous rebellion against an evil corporation. Yager is predominantly an air combat game, you'll get to pilot a variety of aircraft, from small freighters to enormous carriers and battleships. The ships controls have a unique feel. Almost a mix of a jet with a helicopter but it works very well.

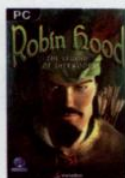
There's an entertaining narrative and amusing characters to interact with, mainly using a first-person with your character doing the Bladerunner-style voice over to keep the plot rolling along.

Visually, Yager is looking phenomenally good especially when in combat. From the cockpit view your swivelled cannon fire produces a Star Wars-like lightshow with all the Xbox effects on display. Firing on ground targets along the sides of mountains and dodging incoming fire literally from all sides is a thrill.



ROBIN HOOD THE LEGEND OF SHERWOOD

PLATFORM: PC ■ PUBLISHER: TAKE2 INTERACTIVE ■ RELEASE: OUT NOW



As Robin of Loxley, you lead all your merry men (and Marian) on a series of daring missions against the tyrannical Prince John and his shady sheriff.

This game has many enjoyable surprises including sword fights that uses mouse movements to produce different attacks. You also assign your crew to odd jobs - making weapons, gathering wood and food, herbs and so on, to keep things running sweetly at HQ.

Missions in Sherwood, resource gathering, a cool story and slash and click combat... Robin Hood: The Legend of Sherwood is enchanting.



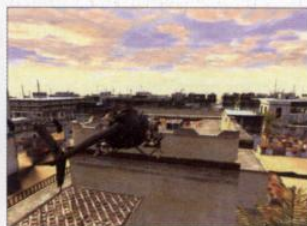
OUT THIS MONTH...



DEAD TO RIGHTS

XBOX ■ EA GAMES

Think Metal Gear Solid 2 meets Max Payne (in a John Woo film) and you'll have a pretty good handle on this new two-fisted action/shooter from Namco. Dead to Rights is already proving to be a sure-fire hit with Xbox gamers.



DELTA FORCE BLACK HAWK DOWN

PC ■ EA GAMES

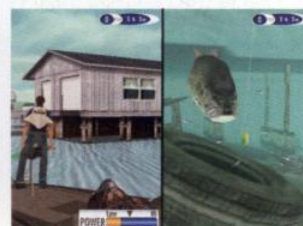
You've seen Ridley Scott's film and now EA have made a game that lets you settle the score with those terrorist crime lords once and for all. A fine addition to the always exciting Delta Force series - just watch out for skinnies with RPGs!



ROBOTECH BATTLECRY

PS2/XBOX/GBA ■ TDK

Pilot Veritech robots that are fighter jets one moment and walking killers the next. If you've been waiting for a decent Transformer game, Robotech Battlecry is the answer to your prayers. This is perhaps the best use of cel-shading yet seen in a game.



SEGA BASS FISHING

PLAYSTATION 2 ■ ACCLAIM

This was such a bizarre game when it first popped up on the Dreamcast, and now it's a budget title on the PS2. At first you'd question the sanity of Sega, but after reeling in a few whoppers without even sliding off the couch, we were hooked.



STAR WARS THE CLONE WARS

PS2/XBOX/CUBE ■ EA GAMES

Like Master Yoda says, the clone wars have begun and in this spanking new vehicle-combat game from LucasArts, players will pick up from where Episode Two left off. There are tons of missions and multiplayer options and even speeder bikes!



CONTRA SHATTERED SOLDIER

PLAYSTATION 2 ■ INFOGAMES

Just Contra games of old, Contra Shattered Soldier puts your skills to the test - even the early levels are like a baptism of fire, and that's with the game set on easy. Shoot everything that moves and remember that persistence pays off.



HOUSE OF THE DEAD III

XBOX ■ INFOGAMES

Zombies are running amok, there's only one thing to do. Blow their freakin' brains out! Not packaged with a gun but includes a free bonus - the arcade classic House of the Dead II. This is Night of the Living Dead on Xbox folks!



VEXX

PLAYSTATION 2 ■ ACCLAIM

Acclaim isn't well known for it's fantasy RPGs but Vexx might change all that. A young man out for revenge, exploring mountains and valleys - typical RPG stuff. But the battles aren't turn-based - can we get a hallelujah?



SPEC OPS AIRBORNE COMMANDO

PSX ■ TAKE2 INTERACTIVE

Remember Spec Ops? The PC shooter that sprung up towards the end of the 90s? The series has been revamped for the original PlayStation. Using a 3/4 isometric view, players can punish those oil-hogging enemies of liberty in 16 tiptop missions. Woot!



THE SIMS

PS2/XBOX ■ EA GAMES

Having made its console debut on the PS2 last month, everyone's favourite people simulator is coming to the Xbox. Creating and watching your Sim alter-egos living out their virtual lives can be wildly addictive. - packed with love, loss, drama, even sexual tension!



ROLLERCOASTER TYCOON

XBOX ■ INFOGAMES

Design and build the biggest, scariest rides ever seen in your very own theme park. The popular PC series is now available for Xbox, with over 50 designs from the traditional to the high-tech and the terrifying.



SHREK SUPER PARTY

XBOX/CUBE ■ EA GAMES

Join Shrek, Donkey, Princess Fiona and all the lovable Shrek characters for barrels of mini-game mayhem. The squeaky-clean Shrek Super Party is designed with younger gamers in mind - it's available for the PlayStation 2 and the Xbox.

COMPETITIONS



GAME BOY ADVANCE SP

We have a Game Boy Advance SP to give away! This is the latest and greatest in "anywhere, anytime" gaming. Answer the following to be in the draw to win.

"What does the SP stand for?"

- a) "Smashing Pumpkins"
- b) "Salty peanuts"
- c) "Special"



THE MARK OF KRI

We have 3 copies of the wonderful new PS2 action/adventure The Mark of Kri to win. Answer the following to be in the draw.

"What does lead character Rau have on his chin?"

- a) "A tattoo"
- b) "A pimple"
- c) "A chicken wing"



FREELANCER

We have 3 copies of Microsoft's wicked new space shooter to give away. Complete the following sentence to go in the draw to win.

"Freelancer is mostly....?"

- a) "about journalism"
- b) "a space combat game"
- c) "about a guy named Lance"



FREEDOM CORDLESS

And we have one of these cool Logitech cordless PS2 controllers to give away. Answer the following to be in the draw to win.

"What is unique about this new controller from Logitech?"

- a) "It's plastic"
- b) "It's water-proof"
- c) "It's cordless"

HOW TO ENTER

Write your name, phone number and contact details on the back of the envelope, list the prize you're after and you *will* need to include the correct answer. All correct entries immediately go into the draw to win. All winners for this month's competitions will be notified April 10, 2003.

Send to: Gamefreaks Competition, PO Box 68211, Newton, Auckland or email: competitions@tenthplanet.co.nz (Maximum 5 entries per email address).

IMPOSSIBLE CREATURES™

From the creators of 'Homeworld' comes 'Impossible Creatures'. With powerful cross cloning technology, you create your own unique warriors to battle across a stunning 3D world. With over 40,000 possible creature combinations, you must engineer the ultimate warriors to reign supreme.

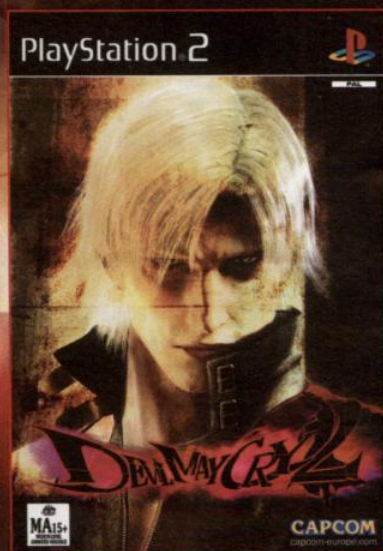


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unleash your
inner demon
april 2003



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